

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached sheets of drawings include New Figures 17 and 18.

Attachment: New Sheets of Drawings 17 and 18.

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This is a Response to the Office Action mailed November 1, 2007, in which a three (3) month Shortened Statutory Period for Response has been set, due to expire February 1, 2008. Claims 1-21, 27, 37, and 41-49 have been canceled. Claims 33-36 and 38-40 are withdrawn from consideration. No new matter has been added to the application. No fee for additional claims is due by way of this Amendment. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any additional fees due by way of this Amendment, or credit any overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 19-1090. Claims 22-26, 28-36 and 38-40 are pending.

Objections

The drawings were objected to because they fail to show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. New Figures 17 and 18 are submitted herewith. Support for such Figures is found in the claims, for example claims 25 and 26, as well as in the specification and originally filed drawings.

The specification has been amended to describe the two new Figures. Support for the amendment is found in the claims, for example claims 25 and 26, as well as in the specification and drawings as originally filed.

No new matter has been added by the new drawings or amendment of the specification.

35 U.S.C. §102(b) Rejections

Claims 22-26 and 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Publication No. 2003/0064774 issued to Fujimoto et al. (hereinafter Fujimoto).

Applicants initially note that Fujimoto published on April 3, 2003, before Applicants' claimed benefit date, thus should be analyzed under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) rather than §102(e).

With respect to claim 22, the Office Action states that Fujimoto "discloses a playing card reader comprising: housing having a receptacle sized to receive a plurality of playing cards (figure 2, item 15 wherein a housing is shown); a transmitter received in the

housing (paragraph [0033]; a receiver received in the housing (paragraph [0033]); and at least a first antenna electrically coupled to at least one of the transmitter and the receiver, the first antenna positioned to electro-magnetically interrogate at least some of the playing cards (summary and paragraphs [0033-0034]).”

A close reading of Fujimoto shows no explicit reference to the identifying information reading device 3A having *at least a first antenna* positioned to electro-magnetically interrogate at least some of the playing cards.

The Office Action completely fails to address the limitation “a computer-readable medium storing a mapping that uniquely identifies playing cards *based on a random distribution of conductive material carried by each of the playing cards*” recited in claim 22. (Emphasis added). In fact, the playing card in Fujimoto has an embedded identifying information recording device 2 which is a means for recording various pieces of information (*i.e.*, at least numeral information on the card for identifying a self, a date, place). Specifically, the identifying information recording device 2 includes an antenna coil 11 and an integrated circuit (IC) chip 12, a tuning capacitor, a rectifying diode and a smoothing capacitor.

With respect to claim 24, the Office Action states that “Fujimoto discloses wherein at least a portion for the housing comprises a radio frequency barrier positioned between the receptacle and an exist of the housing and the first antenna is positioned with respect to the radio frequency barrier and the exit to electro-magnetically interrogate the playing cards one at a time, as each of the playing cards is removed from the housing (paragraphs [0033-0034]). Applicants respectfully disagree. No reference to a *radio frequency barrier*, let alone to the *housing forming a radio frequency barrier*, was found in Fujimoto. Applicants respectfully ask the Examiner to re-read the Fujimoto, including the cited sections, to ascertain that such teaching is missing from Fujimoto.

With respect to claims 25 and 26, the Office Action states that “Fujimoto discloses wherein the first antenna is positioned to electro-magnetically interrogate a number of the playing cards in the receptacle simultaneously (paragraph [0037]; wherein the recording section records information on the contents of the games such as the rules of game, card combinations etc.).” Again Applicants respectfully disagree. Fujimoto makes clear that playing

cards are read one at a time as the playing cards are withdrawn from the card dispenser. Fujimoto, paragraphs 0033, 0034 and 0037. There is no teaching or suggestion, nor any would common sense reason to ignore the clear teachings of Fujimoto in this regard.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 29-30 and 32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fujimoto in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,346,044 issued to McCrea, Jr. (hereinafter McCrea).

With respect to claim 29, as explained above Fujimoto does *not* teach or suggest a computer-readable medium that stores a mapping that uniquely identifies playing cards *based on a random distribution of conductive material carried by each of the playing cards*. In fact, Fujimoto teaches that identifying information (*i.e.*, at least numeral information on the card for identifying a self, a date, place) is stored in an IC embedded in the playing card.

McCrea does not supply this teaching that is missing from Fujimoto. McCrea discloses the use of an optical reader for reading symbols from playing cards removed from a card shoe and optically based sensors to detect presence/absence of playing cards at specific locations on the gaming table. McCrea also discloses the use of optical readers to identify gaming chips placed as wagers, and alternatively smart chip readers to identify the gaming chips placed as wagers. There is no suggestion that the smart chip readers be used for reading smart chips placed in playing cards. Even if there were such a teaching or motivation to modify the teachings of McCrea, there is no teaching in either McCrea nor Fujimoto regarding the use of randomly distributed material to mark playing cards. As noted in Applicants' specification, the use of randomly distributed material may allow for the production of extremely low cost playing cards.. This contrasts with the high cost that would be associated with placing RFID circuits (*i.e.*, antenna and IC) in each playing card. Given current prices, which have fallen significantly since the filing of the present application, decks of playing cards employing RFID circuits would still be cost prohibitive (*e.g.*, \$25-\$50 per deck). In many places, such as in Macau, China, decks are thrown away or recycled after each game. Even in the United States decks of playing cards are routinely discarded.

With respect to claim 32, the Office Actions states that McCrea “discloses a chip reader having at least one wireless transmitter and receiver coupled to a plurality of antennas positioned proximate to respective wagering placement areas to electro-magnetically interrogate wagering chips placed at the wager placement areas and a wireless chip reader.” The Office Action the concludes that “[b]y having a chip reader combined with a card reader, one of ordinary skill in the art would combine prior art known methods to yield to predictable results of providing a fully automated accounting system for accurately and automatically monitoring and recording all gaming chip transaction in a casino, thus reducing theft and fraud with a casino. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to modify Fujimoto to include a chip reader having at least one wireless transmitter and receiver coupled to a plurality of antennas positioned proximate to respective wagering placement areas to electro-magnetically interrogate wagering chips placed at the wager placement areas and a wireless chip reader as taught by McCrea to combine prior art known method to yield predictable results of providing a fully automated accounting system for accurately and automatically monitoring and recording all gaming chip transactions in a casino, thus reducing theft and fraud within a casino.”

However, claim 32 recites “a *dealer’s hand reader* having at least one wireless transmitter and receiver coupled to at a plurality of antennas *positioned to electro-magnetically interrogate at least one playing card forming a dealer’s initial hand* when positioned proximate thereto, the dealer’s hand reader coupled to the computing system to provide data thereto.” (Emphasis added.) Thus, the proposed modification (*i.e.*, chip reader at dealer position) does not teach the limitations of claim 32. Additionally, since the dealer doesn’t typically place a wager, there would be *no* reason for one of skill in the art to make the modification proposed by the Office Action. Such illustrates that the proposed modification is based on impermissible hindsight reconstruction, using the Applicants’ claims to provide a template for piecing to together a rejection. Further, the proposed wireless chip reader would be located proximate the nonexistent dealer’s wager placement position, *not* proximate the position of the dealer’s hand of playing cards.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 31 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fujimoto in view of McCrea as applied to claim 29 above and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,735,742 issued to French (hereinafter French).

French does not supply teaching regarding randomly distributed material missing from Fujimoto and McCrea. In particular, French employs RFID tags in the gaming chips. French, col. 4, lines 15-49; col. 8, lines 1-13. French does not appear to track playing cards. Hence French does not teach identification of playing cards based on a random distribution of conductive material carried by each of the playing cards.

French also does not supply teaching regarding dealer hand reader missing from Fujimoto and McCrea. In particular, French does not appear to automatically track playing cards. The references to card readers in French, for example a dealer card reader 35a, is to conventional card reader for reading identification cards (*e.g.*, magnetic stripe readers). French, col. 5, lines 28-40; col. 6, lines 40-42.

Conclusion

Overall, the cited references do not singly, or in any motivated combination, teach or suggest the claimed features of the embodiments recited in independent claims #, and thus such claims are allowable. Because the remaining claims depend from allowable independent claims #, and also because they include additional limitations, such claims are likewise allowable. If the undersigned attorney has overlooked a relevant teaching in any of the references, the Examiner is requested to point out specifically where such teaching may be found.

In light of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims are allowable. Applicants, therefore, respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider this application and timely allow all pending claims. Examiner Rada is encouraged to contact Mr. Abramonte by telephone to discuss the above and any other distinctions between the claims and the applied references, if desired.

Application No. 10/823,051
Reply to Office Action dated November 1, 2007

If the Examiner notes any informalities in the claims, he is encouraged to contact Mr. Abramonte by telephone to expediently correct such informalities.

Respectfully submitted,
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Enclosures:
New Sheets of Drawings (Figures 17 and 18)

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